

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS TO INDIVIDUALS.

MARCH 9, 1904.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. FULTON (for Mr. GAMBLE), from the Committee on Public Lands,
submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 5511.]

The Committee on Public Lands, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 5511) to authorize registers and receivers of United States land offices to furnish transcripts of their records to individuals, having had the same under consideration beg leave to report it back with the recommendation that it do pass.

A copy of the House report on this bill is herewith printed and adopted as the report of this committee.

[House Report No. 187, Fifty-eighth Congress, second session.]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 5511) to authorize registers and receivers of United States land offices to furnish transcripts of their records to individuals, respectfully report:

As the law now stands the Commissioner of the General Land Office is authorized to make certified copies or transcripts of records in his office, but no provision is made for obtaining copies of official records in the various local land offices throughout the country. Many of these local records are very important and are often needed in evidence in litigation in courts pertaining to land titles. The land districts in Western States are often very large, and land offices may be a long distance from the places where many of the courts are held. Cases often arise where the jurisdiction of the court before which these titles are litigated does not reach to the county in which the land office is situated. Under these circumstances there is no way of obtaining evidence of the contents of the official records of the local land office except through the courtesy of the register of the land office, who may take the records from the land office to the court for evidential purposes.

The taking of such records away from the land offices is attended with more or less danger of loss by fire or other accident. These difficulties could be obviated by allowing certified copies of such records to be made and used in evidence with the same force and effect as the original documents.

The committee recommends that the bill be amended by inserting after the word "thereof," in line 10, the following: "and before all officials authorized to receive evidence," and that the bill shall pass as amended.

